

Trends and Characteristics of Youth Served by the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Richmond VA, 2012-2019

Background

This factsheet examines trends and characteristics of individuals served by the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The DJJ provides services directly to youth and families through 30 Court Service Units (CSUs) and one correctional facility as well as provides oversight to additional CSUs, juvenile detention centers (including community placement programs and detention reentry programs), group homes, shelter care facilities, and independent living programs across the state. This factsheet describes those who were either served by the Thirteenth District Court Service Unit (CSU 13), due to an offense occurring in Richmond City, or by a different CSU and the individual resided in Richmond City. Analyses were conducted of individuals 10 to 17 years of age who: 1) had an offense alleged against them, 2) were petitioned or detained and thus formerly involved in the court system, and 3) those who reoffended (recidivism). Note that youth who were between 10 and 17 years of age at the time of the complaint were included in the analyses. Individuals' approximate residential addresses were geocoded using ArcGIS software and examined at the census tract level. Those living at non-residential addresses (e.g., detention facilities, group homes) were excluded from the tract-level counts; however, these types of living situations are described to provide a more comprehensive view of youth served by DJJ. Intake cases having a violent offense are defined using guidance from the FBI UCR definition¹, and specific to this data are offenses of murder, robbery, or sexual offense.

Intake Complaints

Individuals such as parents, agency representatives, or law enforcement may file a complaint with a Juvenile Justice System intake officer when an offense is alleged against a youth. An intake officer evaluates complaints to determine whether there is probable cause. If so, the complaint may continue through the Juvenile Justice system via: 1) an informal process (case diversion) or 2) through a formal process where a petition² is filed to either initiate court action or placement in a Juvenile Detention Center (JDC). One or more complaints may comprise an intake case and intake decisions are made per complaint. As shown in Table 1, between 2012 and 2019, the number of intake complaints decreased overall from 3,307 in 2012 to 1,994 in 2019. This trend was also observed for the number of intake cases and unique youth each year during this time. For each intake case, the average number of complaints per intake was stable where youth averaged 1.4 complaints.

Table 1: Intake Complaints to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Richmond VA, Ages 10-17 Years

Year	Intake Complaints (n)	Mean (n) Complaints ¹ (Range)	Cases (n)	Youth ² (n)
2012	3,307	1.6 (1-11)	2,452	1,555
2013	2,607	1.5 (1-10)	1,973	1,302
2014	2,431	1.5 (1-9)	1,804	1,165
2015	2,617	1.6 (1-14)	1,864	1,195
2016	2,161	1.6 (1-8)	1,499	941
2017	2,270	1.5 (1-8)	1,576	1,042
2018	2,165	1.6 (1-10)	1,507	930
2019	1,994	1.5 (1-9)	1,419	946

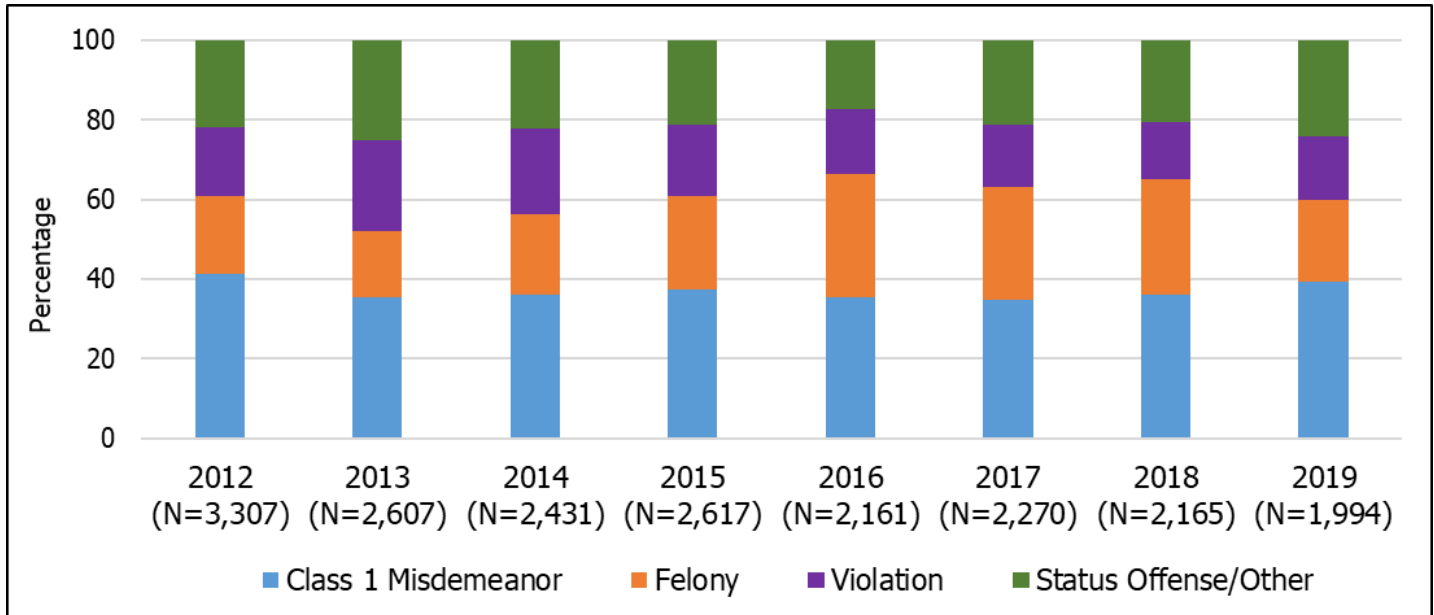
¹Per unique individual each year
²Within each year

¹ Violent crime is composed of four offenses: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/violent-crime>

² **Petition:** A document filed with the J&DR district court by the intake officer initiating formal court action. Petitions may allege that a youth is delinquent, a CHINS, a CHINSup, or an abused or neglected child; or may be for other actions over which the J&DR district court has jurisdiction (e.g., protective orders, work permits, a minor seeking judicial consent for medical procedures).

The distribution of the severity of intake complaints was similar each year between 2012 to 2019 (Figure 1). Overall, most complaints were Class 1 misdemeanors, specifically Class 1 misdemeanors against persons or other Class 1 misdemeanors (8-year mean of 40%). The three most common Class 1 misdemeanor offenses were assault, larceny, and weapons offenses, comprising 56% of all these offenses. Felonies accounted for nearly a quarter of intake complaints (8-year mean of 24%) and similar to Class 1 misdemeanors, assault and larceny were among the most common offenses, accounting for half of the felonies. Status³ or other offenses comprised 22% of the intake complaints during this time; traffic, other status offenses, or CHINSup⁴ offenses being the three most common offense types. Lastly, violations complaints comprised 18% of intake complaints overall, and were largely probation violation offenses, which accounted for 60% of the violations.

Figure 1: Severity of Intake Complaints to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Richmond VA, Ages 10-17 Years, 2012-2019



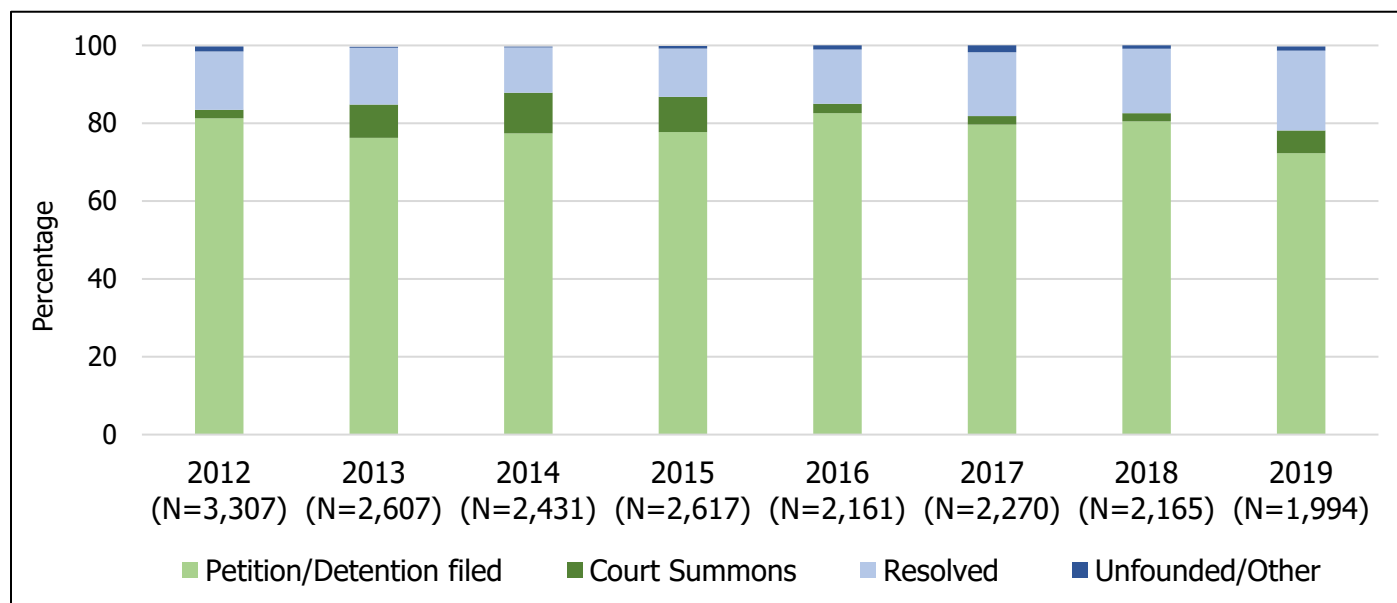
Decisions made for complaints broadly fall into two categories. 1) Those where official court action is initiated. This is done via a petition, detention filing, or through a court summons. 2) Complaints where no official court action is taken, and the complaint does not move further within the justice system. This includes complaints determined to be resolved, where there was a successful diversion, no petition was filed, or outcomes of unofficial counseling, a return to probation supervision or a referral to another agency. Complaints determined to be unfounded upon the intake officer’s review also result in no further action.

Overall, the majority of intake complaints resulted in decisions of official court action, as depicted by the green bars in Figure 2. This was mostly due to petitions or detention orders and less often, a result of a court summons. Among complaints where no official court action is taken (i.e., blue bars in Figure 2), most were complaints determined to be resolved; relatively few complaints were found to be unresolved or be of some other nature.

³ **Status Offense:** An act prohibited by law that would not be an offense if committed by an adult, such as truancy, curfew violation, or running away. See § 16.1- 228 of the *Code of Virginia*.

⁴ **CHINSup:** A child who (i) is habitually and without justification absent from school despite opportunity and reasonable effort to maintain school attendance, (ii) runs away from family or lawful custodian on more than one occasion, or (iii) escapes from or leaves a court-ordered residential placement without permission. See § 16.1-228 of the *Code of Virginia*.

Figure 2: Decisions for Intake Complaints to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Richmond VA, Ages 10-17 Years, 2012-2019



Intake Cases

Youth who have had official court action on complaints (i.e., through petition, detention filing, or court summons) initiated between 2012 and 2019 are described in this section. The number of intake cases and number of youth served by DJJ each year fluctuated, however, the numbers decreased overall during this time period. The average (mean) number of youth who had a prior petitioned case and the proportions with cases resulting in probation⁵ or commitment⁶ to DJJ custody were similar across all years (Table 2).

Table 2: Intake Cases to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Richmond VA, Ages 10-17 Years

Year	Intake Cases (n)	Mean (n) Cases ¹ (Range)	Youth ² (n)	Mean (n) Prior Petitioned Cases ¹ (Range)	Case Resulted in Probation (%)	Case Resulted in Commitment (%)
2012	2,381	1.6 (1-11)	1,510	4.0 (1-22)	23	6
2013	1,905	1.5 (1-10)	1,250	3.8 (1-25)	27	4
2014	1,759	1.6 (1-9)	1,134	3.9 (1-27)	31	3
2015	1,806	1.6 (1-14)	1,157	4.0 (1-21)	24	4
2016	1,462	1.6 (1-8)	913	4.4 (1-19)	25	5
2017	1,530	1.5 (1-8)	1,011	4.3 (1-29)	21	3
2018	1,463	1.6 (1-10)	899	4.5 (1-22)	22	4
2019	1,379	1.5 (1-9)	913	4.5 (1-24)	15	4

¹Per unique individual each year

²Within each year

⁵ **Probation:** The court-ordered disposition placing a youth under the supervision of a CSU in the community, requiring compliance with specified rules and conditions.

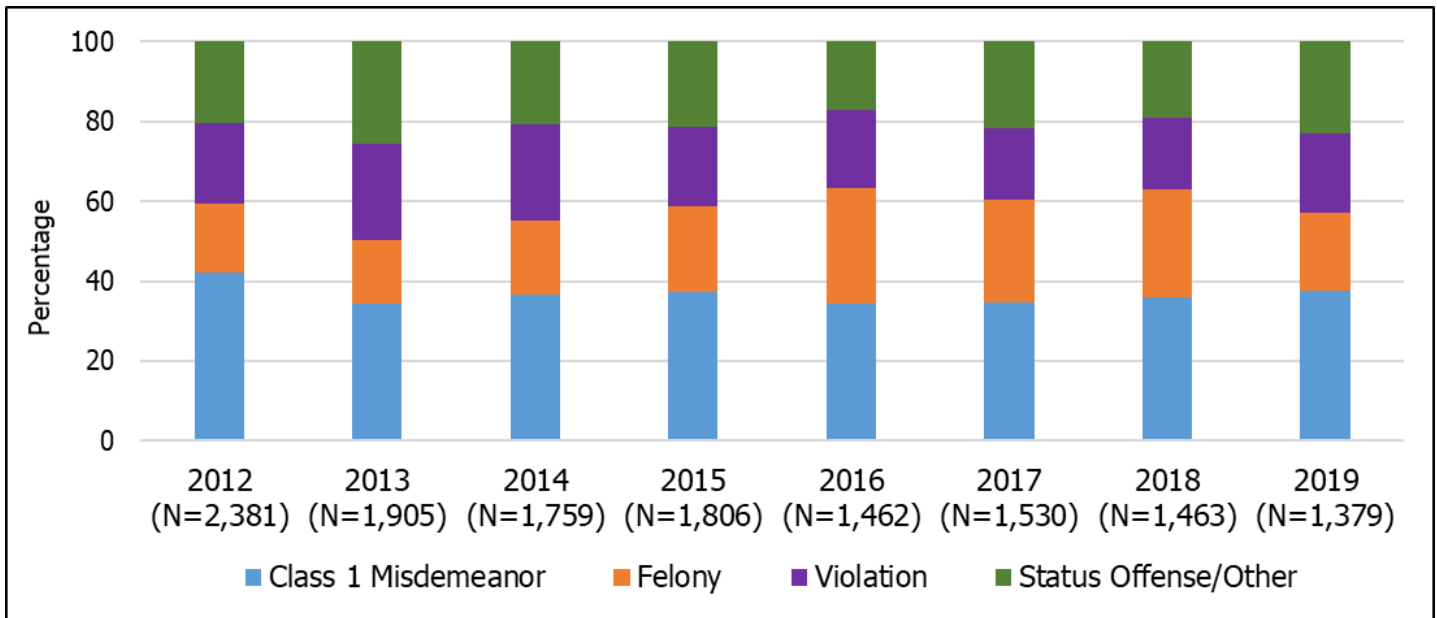
⁶ **Commitment:** The court-ordered disposition placing a youth in the custody of DJJ for a determinate or indeterminate period of time. To be eligible for commitment, a youth must be 14 years of age or older and adjudicated delinquent or convicted of a felony offense, a Class 1 misdemeanor and a prior felony, or four Class 1 misdemeanors that were not part of a common act, transaction, or scheme; or be 11 years of age or older and adjudicated delinquent of a violent juvenile felony. See § 16.1- 278.8 of the *Code of Virginia*.

The distribution of race, ethnicity, and sex of youth with intake cases is shown in Table 3. Overall, most youth were male, Black, and relatively few were of Hispanic ethnicity⁷; however, there were some slight yearly fluctuations observed. The average age for both males and females in each year between 2012 and 2019 was 15 years. Both sexes were 14 years of age on average at their first ever DJJ intake case (not shown).

Year	Race (%)			Hispanic Ethnicity (%)	Sex (%)	
	Black	White	Other		Male	Female
2012	78.6	18.3	3.1	6.3	66.6	33.4
2013	85.0	12.4	2.6	4.4	67.3	32.7
2014	87.1	9.9	2.9	4.4	66.1	33.9
2015	86.4	10.7	2.9	5.4	67.2	32.8
2016	84.6	12.4	3.0	7.2	68.7	31.3
2017	85.0	12.8	2.2	6.7	67.2	32.8
2018	84.9	10.8	4.3	7.4	67.1	32.9
2019	81.1	14.8	4.1	9.6	65.4	34.6

For each intake case, the most severe offense is reported. As shown in Figure 3, the distribution of the most serious offenses was similar each year between 2012 to 2019 and similar to all intake offenses (Figure 2). Class 1 misdemeanors comprised 37% overall, followed by felonies (22% 8-year average), status or other offenses (21% 8-year average) and violations (20% 8-year average).

Figure 3: Severity of Intake Cases to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Richmond VA, Ages 10-17 Years, 2012-2019



As shown in Table 4, among Class 1 misdemeanors, assault and larceny accounted for 60% of offenses in this severity category. Larceny also occurred frequently among felonies, as did robbery and burglary, which

⁷ Note that effective July 2019, ethnicity became a required data entry field, thus fluctuations in prevalence occurring during that year may be impacted due to changes in reporting requirements.

altogether comprised the majority (70%) of this level of severity. Most violations were probation violations or contempt of court offenses. The top five status or other offenses listed constituted 82% of this severity type.

Table 4: Top Five Most Frequent Intake Case Offenses¹ by Severity, Department of Juvenile Justice, Richmond VA, Ages 10-17 Years				
	Class 1 Misdemeanor	Felony	Violation	Status Offense/Other
1	Assault (40%)	Larceny (37%)	Probation violation (67%)	CHINSup (22%)
2	Larceny (20%)	Robbery (17%)	Contempt of court (29%)	Other status offense (17%)
3	Disorderly Conduct (7%)	Burglary (16%)	Parole violation (3%)	Traffic (16%)
4	Vandalism (6%)	Assault (9%)	Narcotics (<1%)	CHINS (15%)
5	Trespass (6%)	Narcotics (4%)	Traffic (<1%)	Civil Commitment (13%)

¹ The most severe offense is reported for intake cases
Note: Percentages represent the proportion of the offense listed from among all offenses within its severity category

Figure 4 contains maps covering two-year periods that depict where youth resided at the time of each intake case via counts (sum) of youth by census tract. Youth living at non-residential addresses (excluded from maps) comprised 6% of all intake cases during the 2012-2019 time period. The majority of youth with intake cases resided within Richmond City. In the area northeast and central relative to the James River as well as just south and east of the river, the same three adjacent tracts had the highest number of youth intake case residents in all years.

Figure 4: Intake Cases by Residence Census Tract at Intake, Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Richmond VA, Ages 10-17 Years, 2012-2019⁸



⁸ Note that youth who had more than one intake in a 2-year period will be counted more than once either within the same tract or in different tracts, depending on if they changed addresses.

Intake Cases – Violent Most Severe Offenses

Between 2012 and 2019, intake cases⁹ with a violent most serious offense comprised between 24% and 32% of all youth with an intake case that year (Figure 5). Similar to youth with complaints to DJJ, about two-thirds were male, most were Black, and relatively few were of Hispanic ethnicity⁷, with some yearly fluctuations in the proportions (Table 5). The average age for both males and females in each year between 2012 and 2019 was 15 years (not shown).

Figure 5: Violent Most Severe Offense Intake Cases to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Richmond VA, Ages 10-17 Years, 2012-2019

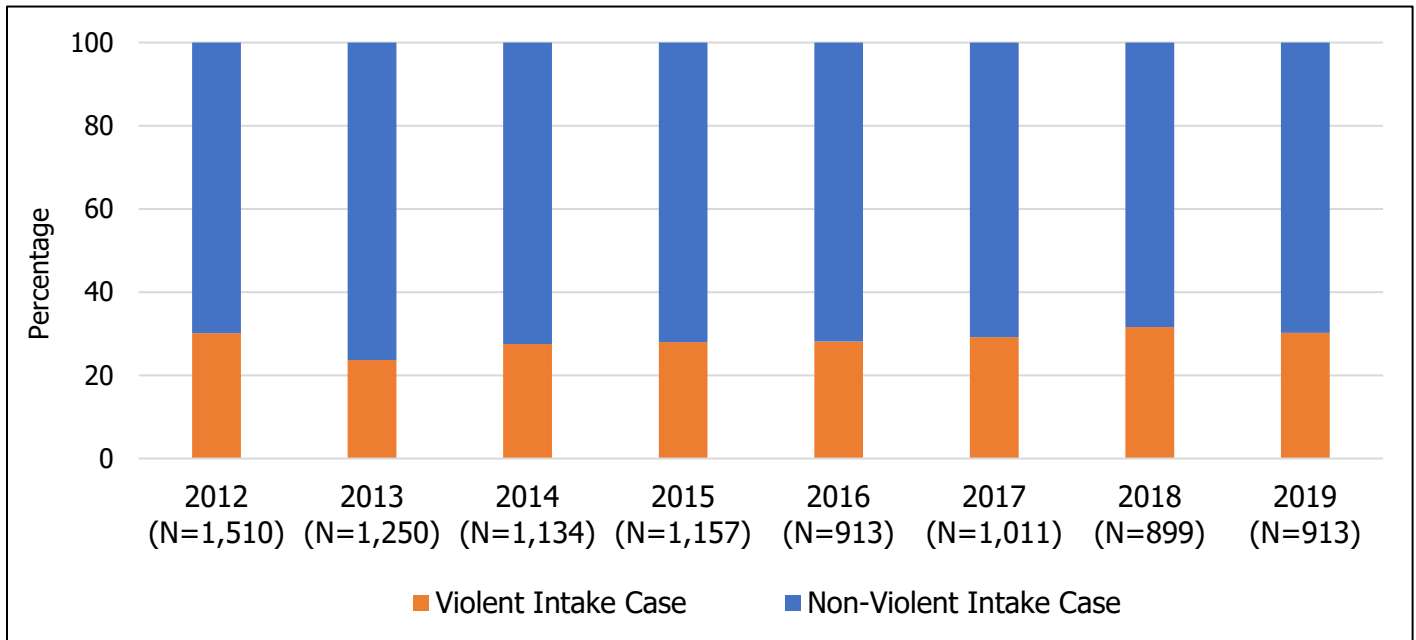


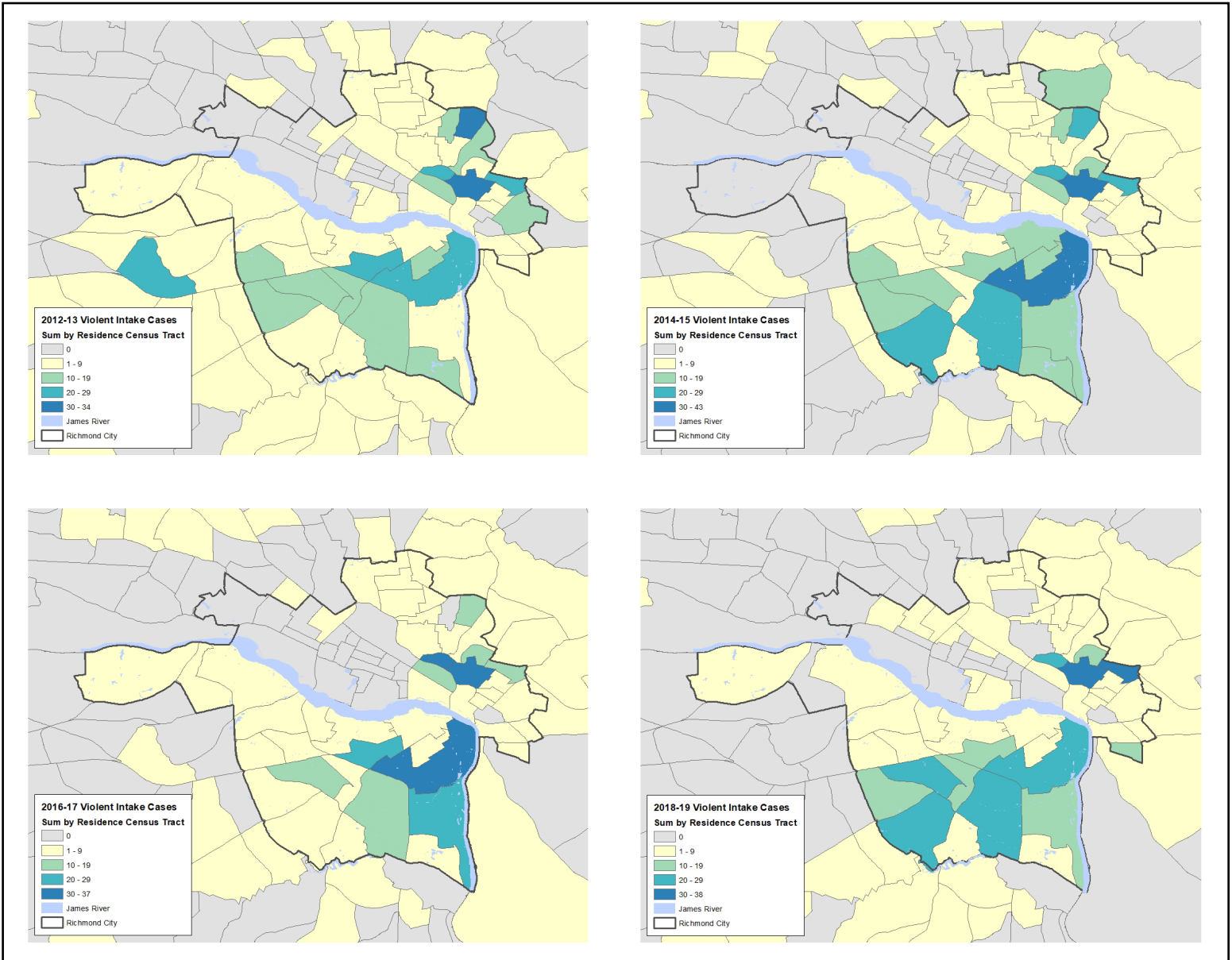
Table 5: Characteristics of Youth with Violent Most Severe Offense Intake Cases to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Richmond VA, Ages 10-17 Years

Year	Race (%)			Hispanic Ethnicity (%)	Sex (%)	
	Black	White	Other		Male	Female
2012 (n=455)	88.0	9.5	2.4	4.6	65.5	34.5
2013 (n=296)	92.9	5.7	1.4	2.7	67.2	32.8
2014 (n=312)	91.9	6.1	1.9	1.9	69.6	30.4
2015 (n=324)	95.7	3.4	0.9	2.4	66.4	33.6
2016 (n=257)	92.2	4.7	3.1	3.3	67.3	32.7
2017 (n=295)	90.5	8.5	1.0	4.4	67.1	32.9
2018 (n=284)	91.1	5.7	3.2	4.5	69.0	31.0
2019 (n=275)	89.1	8.0	2.9	7.5	64.1	35.9

⁹ For youth with multiple intakes in a year, if one or more were defined as violent, the individual was counted as having had a violent intake case in that year.

Figure 6 includes maps similar to Figure 4 where two-year periods were mapped that show where youth lived at the time of each violent intake case. Within each census tract, the number of these intake addresses were summed. Youth with non-residential addresses (excluded from maps) accounted for 7% of all violent intake cases during the 2012-2019 time period. Across all years, the majority of violent intake case youth resided within Richmond City. Census tracts with the highest counts of violent intakes were in areas northeast-central and southeast-central of the James River.

Figure 6: Violent Most Severe Offense Intake Cases by Residence Census Tract at Intake, Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Richmond VA, Ages 10-17 Years, 2012-2019¹⁰



¹⁰ Note that youth who had more than one intake in a 2-year period will be counted more than once either within the same tract or in different tracts, depending on if they changed addresses.

Appendix A: Data tables as an alternative to figures

Figure 1 Alternative Table: Severity of Intake Complaints to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Ages 10-17 Years, 2012-2019

	Total Intake Complaints (n)	Class 1 Misdemeanor (%)	Felony (%)	Violation (%)	Status Offense or Other (%)
2012	3307	41	20	17	22
2013	2607	35	17	23	25
2014	2431	36	20	22	22
2015	2617	37	24	18	21
2016	2161	35	31	16	17
2017	2270	35	29	16	21
2018	2165	36	29	14	21
2019	1994	39	21	16	24

Figure 2 Alternative Table: Decisions for Intake Complaints to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Ages 10-17 Years, 2012-2019

	Total Intake Complaints (n)	Petition/Detention Filed (%)	Court Summons (%)	Resolved (%)	Unfounded or Other (%)
2012	3307	81	2	15	1
2013	2607	76	9	15	<1
2014	2431	77	10	12	<1
2015	2617	78	9	12	1
2016	2161	83	2	14	2
2017	2270	80	2	16	2
2018	2165	81	2	17	1
2019	1994	72	6	21	1

Figure 3 Alternative Table: Severity of Intake Cases to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Ages 10-17 Years, 2012-2019

	Total Intake Cases (n)	Class 1 Misdemeanor (%)	Felony (%)	Violation (%)	Status Offense or Other (%)
2012	2381	42	17	20	20
2013	1905	34	16	24	26
2014	1759	37	18	24	21
2015	1806	37	22	20	21
2016	1462	34	29	20	17
2017	1530	35	26	18	22
2018	1463	36	27	18	19
2019	1379	38	19	20	23

Figure 5 Alternative Table: Violent Most Severe Offense Intake Cases to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Ages 10-17 Years, 2012-2019

	Total Intake Cases (n)	Non-Violent (%)	Violent (%)
2012	1510	70	30
2013	1250	76	24
2014	1134	72	28
2015	1157	72	28
2016	913	72	28
2017	1011	71	29
2018	899	68	32
2019	913	70	30

¹ For youth with multiple intakes in a year, if one or more were defined as violent, the individual was counted as having had a violent intake case in that year.

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Note: The findings of this study are the responsibility of the researchers, and cooperation by the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice in facilitating this research should not be construed as an endorsement of the conclusions drawn by the researchers.

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